



Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,
As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente;
And Troilus to Troye homward he wente.

This Diomedes, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte: Al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somewhat shal I seye.
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyde, eek tymes twyes twelve:
He is a fool that wol foryete himselfe.

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough:
That certaynly I am aboute nought
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been ybrought
So sone away; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.

This Diomedes, as he that coude his good,
Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encesse mighte or eche
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde

Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

for trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with whiche he mighte
hir plesse,
That he nolde doon his payne & al his might
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese.
And preyde hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde: Ywis, we Grekes con have joye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.

He seyde eek thus: I woot, yow thinketh
straunge,
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Chaqueintaunce of these Troianes to
chaunge,
for folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never God but if as trewe
A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Troian is, and eek as kinde.

And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your frend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more acquaintance eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight,
So fro this forth I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke unto your herte:



And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt;
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt.
And if I may your harmes not redresse,
I am right sory for your hevynesse.

And though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe
han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.
And, for the love of God, my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me,
for trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
That half so looth your wrath the wolde
deserve.

And here it that we been so neigh the tente
Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente;
But this enseled til another day.
Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
God help me so, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Your owene aboven every creature.

Thus seyde I never er now to woman born;
for God myn herte as wisly glade so,
I lovede never woman herebiforn

As paramours, ne never shal no mo.
And, for the love of God, beth not my fo;
Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.

And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve;
for I have herd or this of many a wight,
hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve.
Eek I am not of power for to stryve
Hyens the god of love, but him obeie
I wol alwey, and mercy I yow prey.

Ther been so worthy knightes in this place
And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle
wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.
But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
So lowly ne so trewely you serve
Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.

Criseide unto that purpos tyte answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two.
hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast atwo.
for whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan to sye.